

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

MQ-1B, T/N 06-3167 KANDAHAR AB, AFGHANISTAN 2 NOVEMBER 2008

On 2 November 2008, at 1427 local (L) Kandahar time, an MQ-1B aircraft, tail number 06-3167, impacted the ground on Kandahar Air Base (AB), Afghanistan, while participating in a combat support mission in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. It was assigned to the 451st Air Expeditionary Group, Kandahar AB. An aircrew the 62d Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron launched the Mishap Remotely Piloted Aircraft (MRPA) from the Launch and Recovery Element at Kandahar. Upon impact the MRPA was damaged beyond economical repair. The estimated cost of aircraft damage is \$4.67 Million. There were no injuries and there was no damage to government or private property.

After normal maintenance and pre-flight checks, the MRPA, loaded with one hellfire missile, taxied and departed at approximately 1422L (local time) into a headwind of approximately 13 to 15 knots sustained, with gusts of 18 to 25 knots. Five minutes into flight, as the MRPA was passing 1,960 feet of altitude, the Mishap Pilot (MP) determined he had overshot his intended course. He initiated a left turn, without rudder, to return to his path. At that time the aircraft rolled completely over due to the aggressive input of 45 degrees left roll, the wind direction, and the weight of the missile on the left wing. The MP made an input of a 56 degrees right roll in an attempt to flip the aircraft back over, however, the MRPA departed controlled flight, began to spin and crashed to the ground. The aircraft was severely damaged by fire and the wreckage shipped to Creech AFB, Nevada.

The Accident Investigation Board President could not determine a cause by clear and convincing evidence. He determined the left turn without rudder, which was too aggressive for the light airframe, combined with the wind and the weight of the missile substantially contributed to the mishap.

Under 10 U.S.C. 2254(d), any opinion of the accident investigators as to the cause of, or the factors contributing to, the accident set forth in the accident investigation report may not be considered as evidence in any civil or criminal proceeding arising from the accident, nor may such information be considered an admission of liability of the United States or by any person referred to in those conclusions or statements.